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CONSUMER TIME

SAVING THE SOIL

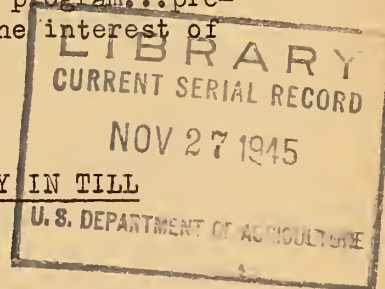
NETWORK: NBC

DATE: November 10, 1945

ORIGIN: WRC

TIME: 12:15-12:30 PM- EST

(Produced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture...this script is for reference only...and may not be broadcast without special permission. The title CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast of the program...presented for more than twelve years in the interest of consumers.)



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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER
4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available as a public service for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
5. JOHN: CONSUMER TIME friends, as we promised last week...today we're going to talk about how our farmers and scientists everywhere...are working to conserve the country's land...the rich soil of our nation.
6. FREYMAN: Now wait a minute, Johnny...do you honestly think I'd be interested in that? I mean...after all, I'm simply a housewife...why would I want to know about soil conservation?
7. JOHN: But there, you've said it, Mrs. Freyman. Soil Conservation! You already know something about it...
8. FREYMAN: I do?
9. JOHN: Sure! Do you know that just 15 years ago...only back in 1930, you would never have known the words "soil conservation". You would never have thought about it.

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10. FREYMAN: Well, I don't know. All it means to me is just what I've heard. A cornfield washes away into gullies...a farmer does something; plants something maybe, to stop it.
11. JOHN: Exactly. 'Erosion's the word...
12. FREYMAN: Erosion. That's it. The rain washes all the land away.
13. JOHN: Washes the topsoil.
14. FREYMAN: Yes, the topsoil. And what's left underneath will hardly grow a hill of beans.
15. JOHN: Mrs. Freyman, you've been reading up on it...just to show me.
16. FREYMAN: No...I haven't at all.
17. JOHN: Well...the fact that soil conservation is something common to nearly everybody today...that most people know, or have heard, a little about it...is one of the most interesting stories in agriculture.
18. FREYMAN: And we're going to hear all about it now...right, Johnny?
19. JOHN: Right, Mrs. Freyman. Let's begin our story...
20. MUSIC: GROWS FAINTLY BEHIND.
21. NARRATOR: Imagine...imagine you were to reduce the world...to a globe a mere six feet in diameter...a globe that possibly you could balance on your dining room table. Then you were to wrap it in a single layer of thin tissue paper.
22. JOHN: That tissue paper would represent the thin crust of soil that lies over the earth...over that part of the earth not covered by water.
23. NARRATOR: And from that delicate sheet...that thin crust of topsoil...more than two thousand million people must draw all their sustenance...must obtain their very life.
24. MUSIC: SHORT CHORD OUT.

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25. JOHN: The world's farm lands are its most vital, most precious resource...
26. NARRATOR: Yet...faster...and more disastrously than people know about... the soil...the very source of the world's food...is slowly slipping away.
27. MUSIC: SINGLE CHORD FOR ACCENT
28. FREYMAN: The land? Slipping away? How could it...for goodness sake what's happening to it?
29. NARRATOR: In some places, it goes by erosion...washes away in the rain.
30. JOHN: Other places, it blows away in clouds of heavy dust...
31. NARRATOR: It wears out...from overplanting.
32. JOHN: It's richness drained by too many crops, and not replaced.
33. NARRATOR: And when the richness of the soil is once lost, for all practical purposes it is lost forever. For Nature requires hundreds of years to build productive soil.
34. MUSIC: BRIEF ACCENT
35. JOHN: Here is a story...
36. NARRATOR: By the year 1930, America had undergone more than a century of land abuse. Nearly a hundred million acres of good land had been ruined. It had eroded, blown away...was no longer good for practical cultivation.
37. JOHN: And this in our own, rich land of plenty....
38. NARRATOR: Not only cropland, but pastures, and woodlands, millions of acres of them, were being eaten away by wind and rain.
39. JOHN: But what was being done about it...
40. NARRATOR: Nothing...Almost nothing was being done to stop it. Very little was known, then, about soil conservation. And hardly anyone was concerned about it. "Why worry", we said, "goodness knows, in America there is plenty of land."



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41. JOHN: But the facts of the case were...the failure to recognize the slow destruction of the soil brought this nation too close to the danger line; to the place where the soil would no longer support our crops and cattle.
42. MUSIC: ACCENT CHORD.
43. NARRATOR: Today...we might well have reached that crisis...had it not been for a group of militant men...scientists with an almost religious fervor for the land...scientists who were crusaders...scientists who answered to the new name of "soil conservationists".
44. JOHN: The crusade of the soil conservationists...was to awaken the country from its lethargy...and lack of knowledge...about soil erosion. (VERY SLIGHT FADE)
45. MUSIC: SNEAKS IN BEHIND FOLLOWING...ACCENTING RAPID FIRE ; . . .
46. SCIENTIST ONE: You'd save that topsoil of yours if you'd build a terrace along here...
47. SCIENTIST TWO: Now let me show you, Mr. MacGregor, how strip cropping would help you get a lot more corn to the acre.
48. SCIENTIST ONE: Why don't you just try this one season...plant what we call a "cover crop". That'll help hold the land together during the winter.
49. SCIENTIST TWO: Here's a suggestion, Mr. O'Neal...ever heard of contour planting? That's planting around the hillside on a curve ...instead of straight up and down.
50. SCIENTIST ONE: That'll keep the soil from washing down the hill...
51. MUSIC: VERY SLOWLY A LITTLE LOUDER...A LITTLE FASTER...BUILDS TO END. VOICES BUILD OVER MUSIC, LOUDER, FASTER...NOT TOO MUCH.
52. SCIENTIST ONE: Why don't you try mulching that crop...?
53. SCIENTIST TWO: Pasture rotation will help out here, all right.

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54. SCIENTIST ONE: Better try to control those gullies.
55. SCIENTIST TWO: (CROSSFADE INTO MUSIC) Better all-around land utilization  
...that's what's needed...
56. MUSIC: SHORT BRIDGE
57. NARRATOR: Yes, these scientists...these self-styled "soil conservation-  
ists", pioneering in a field that was new...began to succeed  
beyond their fondest hopes...Many farmers tried the experiment  
immediately and with enthusiasm...others had to be shown...some  
remained skeptical...(SLIGHT FADE)
58. FARMER: No sir! I'm not going in for any of that crazy farming.  
Planting a field in queer looking curves...instead of straight  
up and down rows.
59. NARRATOR: But many a farmer...looked at his neighbor's fields...terraced  
or countoured for "crazy farming", and he saw his neighbors  
get a bigger crop and a better crop...saw the erosion stopped,  
the gullies erased...saw that the land stayed, instead of  
being washed away...and many a skeptical farmer, resolved to  
give it a try.
60. JOHN: Today...in less than fifteen years...we have, in general,  
learned how to take care of our productive land. Today,  
farmers and soil conservationists...have worked together  
to preserve permanently for the good of the nation...eighty  
million acres of land.
61. NARRATOR: But there is still a great deal to be done...for destructive  
winds and rains continue. And the war, which saw the greatest  
harvests in this country's history...also took its toll in  
overplanted, worn-out lands...throughout the nation.
62. MUSIC: VERY BRIEF...FADE UNDER.

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63. FREYMAN: Now that's a very interesting story. And it's true...that today I do know the words "soil conservation", where I probably never even heard them 15 years ago.
64. JOHN: Very true, Mrs. Freyman.
65. FREYMAN: But of course I don't know anything about planting in strips, and planting on terraces, or whatever that was.
66. JOHN: (LAUGH) No...those technical details of soil conservation... they're the farmer's worry. And how he preserves his topsoil ...depends on what kind of soil he has...and what his problems are, of course.
67. FREYMAN: Well, now what exactly is a housewife's interest in soil conservation, Johnny?
68. JOHN: Now you've asked it. It's important to you, of course, because for one thing...
69. NARRATOR: For one thing...all our food comes from the soil...except that which comes from the sea. And even the fishes, like all other living things, are fed, in the final analysis, out of the fertility of the land.
70. JOHN: It is again important, because if we are to have a world at peace, we must have a world that is free from want. To have abundant food...there must be abundant productive land...
71. NARRATOR: And yet...the fact remains, that the area of good food-producing land on earth is slowly shrinking...before the marching onslaught of erosion...from Australia to China, from the Union of South Africa to Canada...
72. JOHN: There is no longer an abundance of good productive land to feed and clothe the peoples of the world...
73. NARRATOR: There is just enough...if every bit is wisely used...but there is not a single acre to waste.



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74. JOHN: There are four billion acres of productive land in the world...to feed two billion people. Two acres for every person. Did you know, Mrs. Freyman, that roughly speaking, if things were evenly divided there'd be just two acres to support you?
75. FREYMAN: Why no!
76. NARRATOR: And yet...some nutritionists say that for even a minimum adequate diet, there should be two and a half good productive acres of land in the world for every person.
77. JOHN: Now you see, Mrs. Freyman...as a homemaker...how close to you, and your kitchen, this subject of "saving the soil" is?
78. FREYMAN: I do see, Johnny...I never did exactly give much thought to the actual land that grows our food.
79. JOHN: Then here's another thing...it's something you hear more and more about all the time. Listen, for this strikes pretty close to home.
80. NARRATOR: Scientists today have discovered...that soil erosion... makes human erosion. That on the condition of the soil... depends the condition of the people.
81. MUSIC: ACCENT
82. FREYMAN: Why, how could that be. As long as I eat green vegetables... and healthy looking food...what difference does it make what kind of land it's grown on!
83. JOHN: But that's just it, Mrs. Freyman. When a soil is poor in minerals...the plants are poor in minerals...therefore, we get less food value when we eat vegetables grown on poor soil.
84. SCIENTIST ONE: A cow grazing on depleted, eroded land...gives milk with far less Vitamin A.





85. SCIENTIST TWO: Vegetables grown on ground-lacking in iron...are found to lack iron themselves.
86. SCIENTIST ONE: It has also been found...that when soil is lacking in the minerals Cooper and Cobalt...the animals in that area frequently have anemia.
87. SCIENTIST TWO: The human body...plants...animals...must have minerals from the topsoil...phosphorus...lime...sulphur.
88. SCIENTIST ONE: Iodine...copper...iron...cobalt...and many others.
89. SCIENTIST TWO: As the soil is, so are the plants and animals...and so are the people.
90. MUSIC: SHARP CHORD
91. FREYMAN: But goodness knows, I could tell, couldn't I? I simply wouldn't buy vegetables that looked scrawny and not nourishing.
92. JOHN: You can hardly tell by looking, Mrs. Freyman...that's just it. For instance...look here at these two lettuce leaves. Can you tell which one has more food value?
93. FREYMAN: Why...let's see...no, they look exactly the same.
94. JOHN: They do. Both are big, and crisp and green. But one of them...this one I've marked, has 60 times more calcium than this one. It was an experiment. Calcium was added to the soil that grew this leaf.
95. FREYMAN: Well, I never...you mean when I buy vegetables in the store... I can't actually tell by looking which are more nourishing than others?
96. JOHN: Not necessarily. But you see...that's what the soil conservationists are aiming for...that rich topsoil is preserved everywhere throughout the country...with the result that our vegetables...our milk...and meat...have the highest possible food value.

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97. NARRATOR: Although much remains to be learned, there is a great deal of evidence that lack of physical and mental vigor... is related to deficiencies in the soil..
98. SCIENTIST ONE: Some parts of these United States...are far healthier than others. In one State, for instance, seven out of every ten men examined for the Army...were found acceptable. In another section of the country...only three out of ten could pass the physical examination.
99. SCIENTIST TWO: The difference in health in these areas is quite marked. And what is at the root of these differences? We scientists say....the root lies principally in the soil.
100. MUSIC: BRIDGE
101. JOHN: So you see, Mrs. Freyman...what it all gets back to? It's the matter of conserving the soil...the best soil possible. Of course not all sections of the country have the same quality or kind of land...but what conservationists are working toward is getting the best out of the land, the country over.
102. FREYMAN: Well, actually this turns out to be very interesting to me, Johnny. Goodness...if I can't always tell by looking or tasting which vegetables were grown on good, rich soil...I'm certainly all for the farmers who are keeping their lands in good condition! Why...I think I could even get interested in contour plowing or whatever you call it...and drainage and terraces and all those things that stop erosion.
103. MUSIC: SNEAKS IN ON ABOVE AND HOLD BEHIND.
104. JOHN: Well, it's an important thing to think about, Mrs. Freyman... that not only are we what we eat...but what we eat and how well, depends on the very land itself.
105. MUSIC: SHORT...VERY SHORT BRIDGE...THEN OUT.

1. *Pharmaceuticals* (1997) 10: 101-102.  
 2. *Pharmaceuticals* (1997) 10: 103-104.  
 3. *Pharmaceuticals* (1997) 10: 105-106.  
 4. *Pharmaceuticals* (1997) 10: 107-108.  
 5. *Pharmaceuticals* (1997) 10: 109-110.  
 6. *Pharmaceuticals* (1997) 10: 111-112.  
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106. JOHN: Now there's one more thing, just to bring this right down to your own backyard.
107. FREYMAN: Where my victory garden was?
108. JOHN: Exactly...In a way, you know, you probably practiced some kinds of soil conservation yourself...on a small scale.
109. FREYMAN: Did I?
110. JOHN: Sure, for instance, when you put a mulch around the plants... a layer of straw or leaves...a compost of some kind...that's a sort of conservation. It holds the water in, and keeps the weeds down.
111. FREYMAN: Why so it does!
112. JOHN: And a lot of people...in the fall...do something else that's pretty important to that plot of land.
113. FREYMAN: What's that, Johnny.
114. JOHN: They plant what the soil conservationists / <sup>call</sup> a "cover crop". Something that will hold the soil intact during the winter months. Then in spring it can be spaded under. And the soil is all the better off for it. In some parts of the country, it's not too late yet to plant a garden over with barley or rye...or some kind of legume.
115. FREYMAN: I think I'll try that, Johnny...I'll be a kind of soil conservationist myself.
116. MUSIC: BRIEF BRIDGE...FADE DOWN UNDER.
117. NARRATOR: The Farm lands of the world are its most vital, most precious resources. In their wise use and maintenance lies not only the future of the land itself, but in the final analysis, the future of all nations, great and small...the future of mankind.
118. MUSIC: BRIDGE







119. FREYMAN: Next week, on CONSUMER TIME, Johnny...we're going to hear how two can live cheaper than one...and we're going to hear a few suggestions on preparing meals and menus for two.
120. JOHN: So be with us next week, friends, for our "Food for Two" edition of...
121. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...
122. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!
123. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.
124. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME, written by Christine Kempton, is presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D.C. This broadcast period for CONSUMER TIME has been made available as a public service.
125. JOHN: CONSUMER TIME salutes the radio industry...twenty five years old this fall. Radio...twenty-five years in the service of...the consumer!
126. ANNCR: This is the National Broadcasting Company.

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